

Akha A04

Miao AE5

/68 cont. /

A is no question of material or environmental factors, nor can
 M there be any thought of influences coming from Europe.
 524 Independent invention is also hardly likely in view of the fre-
 526 quent occurrence of the phenomena. One is more apt to suspect
 171 a common origin.

A There was no evidence of animal fights among the Akha
 M and only rarely among the Meau. Only cockfights are some-
 541 times arranged, but no knives are tied to the spurs of the cocks,
 171 as is the practice among the Indonesians and the Thai peoples.
 [525] Betting in connection with cockfights, at which the Thai often
 lose their entire fortune, is unknown. Also, fights between
 crickets, fish, or steers are unknown, although the neighboring
 Thai in the valleys are passionately fond of arranging all these
 fights.

A Children begin to perform work at the age of four among
 M both the Meau and Akha. They help the mother collect fire-
 857 wood (Ill. 38), which they carry home in their own small wood
 526 /69/ carriers, or they help their parents weed the rice fields.
 [252] carry home fruits and sugar cane in their little baskets (Ill. 93),
 and while their mother turns the grindstone, they carefully pour
 the rice or maize into the opening of the millstones. They tend
 the domestic animals and, in the absence of their parents, guard
 the houses. Boys at this age are already used as messengers,
 A a particularly important task in a country where there is neither
 M
 [203] mail nor telephone service. At the age of six or seven at the
 latest, the children already begin to be a definite and earnest
 help to their parents, especially since tasks can be assigned
 to them without having to make a check afterwards. With the
 exception of the messenger service, which is done only by boys,
 both sexes alike are pressed into service, and the children are
 always very anxious to do their duty, ambitious, and proud
 of the work performed. I never heard of a child's having
 complained about work that was too hard.

A Just as there are no definite ages of the children for games,
 M there are none for work. There is no general work schedule, but
 857 rather an individual regard for the tendencies of the growing
 561 children, which, however, do not yet manifest themselves in
 461 the early years of childhood. The work assigned to the children

1/2 [see cat. 116, p 272 - ANALYST]

2/2 [" " " , p 643 - "]

/69 cont./

A is first of all adjusted to their physical strength; in short, the
 M playful imitation of adult activity is automatically replaced by
 857 actual work as soon as the necessary strength is there. Secondly,
 561 the work depends upon the seasons since, in general, the work
 461 of the Meau is conditioned by them.

Otherwise, there is no regulation of activity, either within the work group or with respect to the time that is to be spent at work and at play. Everything is arranged according to the work of the adults, into which all the children are always drawn. At the time when the fields are cultivated or when new villages are to be laid out, everyone must work uninterruptedly according to his strength from dawn to dusk, but during the period after the harvest there are long stretches of leisure, and the days are then filled with laughter and games. In any case, there is no more importance attached to a child's reaching the working age than to his completion of the sixth year, which is so significant for our children.

/70/ In general, it can be said that both sexes at about the age of sixteen are fully able to perform the work of the adults.

2. The Children's Group

A As soon as the children of the Meau and Akha are three
 M or four years old, they are admitted into the children's group
 857 (Ill. 14). Even earlier, however, they are taken along by
 [156] their older siblings, on whose backs they participate in the games. There seems to be hardly any eccentrics among the children; at any rate, I never saw a child going about by himself.

M The composition of the children's group varies greatly
 857 and depends on which children happen to have free time.
 157 Among the Meau, the leader of the group is always the child present at the moment who is physically the strongest, although there is no noticeable competition for the position of leader. All of them, however, know exactly who is the strongest, and accordingly they submit to him without demur. Sometimes there are scuffles within the group. Competition